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COUNTRY Polish Occupied Germany REPORT NO. *APR 5/28*

TOPIC Polish Troops in Sorau

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EVALUATION *[redacted]* PLACE OBTAINED *[redacted]*

DATE OF CONTENT prior to January 1951

DATE OBTAINED *[redacted]* DATE PREPARED 26 June 1951REFERENCES *[redacted]* 25X1A

PAGES 3 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE) 1 - sketch on ditto

REMARKS *[redacted]*

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General.

1. The only barracks installation in Sorau (O 52/B 16) is about 1 km east of the town, on the south side of the highway to Sagan (O 52/B 26), and adjoins a slaughterhouse on the west. The installation, which consists of an eastern and a western section, was constructed before World War II, and was not damaged. It was occupied by about 2,000 Polish troops prior to January 1951.

Units in the Western Barracks Section.

2. An SP artillery and armored reconnaissance unit of 400 to 500 men was transferred to Sorau in early November 1950 and assigned to billets formerly occupied by a transport unit. According to members of the unit they came from Sagan. The troops were on active duty and apparently did not include recruits inducted in the fall of 1950. The unit, whose T/O was not determined, was equipped with 30 to 40 armored reconnaissance cars of the same type and about 35 SP guns, also of the same type. From 10 to 15 of these vehicles were stored in the open at all times, covered with tarpaulins. The armored reconnaissance cars had six wheels with pneumatic tires, with the two rear axles installed close together; a coffin-shaped armored body with sloping walls; no turret; a door opening to the rear; and a gun of about 75 mm without muzzle brake which projected about 1½ meters beyond the front of the vehicle. The SP guns had large bogie wheels, no track-supporting rollers, and a wedge-shaped nose with a central hatch cover which opened upward. They mounted a gun of 120 to 130 mm with a muzzle brake which projected from a mantlet in the center of the vehicle. The SP guns were equipped with an antenna, but mounted no AA machine gun. The SP guns, which had three-digit numbers, were occasionally observed in action in the area north of the barracks installation, but never longer than half a day. (1) From November 1950 to January 1951, neither training in firing nor combined-arms exercises were observed. No reconnaissance cars were seen outside the barracks installation during this period of time; the troops were occupied mainly with technical and fatigue duties. Prior to November 1950, the billets of the SP artillery and armored reconnaissance unit were occupied by a horse-drawn transport unit of about 200 men, which was transferred in October 1950, allegedly to Sagan. The transport unit was equipped with about 60 wooden vehicles, each drawn by a team of two horses. The troops, who wore

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visor-type service caps with a red band, were generally older than the average personnel of other units, and included reservists. In 1950, the transport unit did not go to a troop training ground as other units did.

3. An artillery unit roved into the barracks installation in 1949. The unit was equipped with 25 light motorized guns, with box-trail carriages (Kastenlafette), two disk wheels with pneumatic tires not covered by the shield, short thick barrels with muzzle brakes projecting slightly beyond the square shield. The gun was about 1.2 meters high. The crew for each gun included a chief of section, a driver, and six gunners. Training generally took place on the terrain north of the barracks installation. Units equipped with eight guns were occasionally observed marching out of the installation for field practice. No gunfire was heard in the Scrau area. In 1950, the unit moved by train to a troop training grounds near Poznan (P 53/X 26) for several weeks. (2)
4. The motor vehicle drivers of the units located in the western section of the barracks installation were billeted in two adjoining buildings. The motor vehicles, whose total number was not determined, included three-axle Studebaker trucks and two-axle light trucks serving both as prime movers for the guns of the artillery unit and as personnel carriers. The latter trucks were low, equipped with two benches seating six to eight men each, and had unusually wide radiators. In general, all vehicles were in good mechanical condition. New personnel received training in truck driving during the summer of 1950. Some Studebaker trucks were used to haul supplies. The drivers of these vehicles were doing maintenance work in the garages most of the time. (3)
5. The headquarters of both the armored unit and the artillery unit were located in two buildings in the western section. No Polish general was ever observed within the barracks installation.

Units in the Eastern Barracks Section.

6. An artillery unit of undetermined strength was located in two buildings as early as 1949. The unit was equipped with 20 guns which were towed by Studebaker trucks carrying eight gunners each. The guns had split-trail carriages, two disk wheels with rubber tires, and rectangular shields with lateral wings slightly bent backwards. The guns were about 120 mm with the barrels projecting beyond the shield not less than 2 meters. The unit, which was only occasionally seen moving out with the guns, went to a troop training ground near Poznan in the summer of 1950. (4)
7. A motorized infantry unit moved into three buildings in 1949. The troops were equipped with submachine guns with both drum and clip magazines, rifles, and some machine guns mounted on two small wheels each. Training was held mostly in the terrain north of the barracks installation. The troops were occasionally observed leaving the installation by truck for field practice. No joint exercises with other arms were observed. This unit also went to the troop training ground in the summer of 1950.
8. The drivers of the units located in the eastern section of the barracks installation were billeted in two adjoining buildings. They had three-axle Studebaker trucks exclusively which served as prime movers for the guns of the artillery unit located in the eastern part of the installation, and as combat vehicles for the motorized infantry unit. All vehicles were well maintained. A driving school was held in the summer of 1950.

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9. The headquarters of both the artillery and the motorized infantry unit moved into two buildings in 1949. No general was ever observed. (5)

Uniforms.

10. On duty, the troops of the armored units wore blue belted cover-alls without insignia. While driving, the crews wore dark-blue crash helmets. The dress uniform was made of blue fabric and included a high-collared blouse with blue epaulets showing rank insignia; long trousers; buckled puttees; red collar patches, **rounded** and pointed downward, which were allegedly not worn by EN; and a blue field cap with the Polish eagle emblem or blue visor-type caps with bands of the same color. Officers wore silver-bordered caps.

11. Prior to the fall of 1950, the troops of the artillery and the motorized infantry unit wore the usual brown Polish Army uniform with a red cap band. Blue uniforms of a new issue with the old red cap bands were subsequently distributed to all troops. Tank troops, drivers, and gunners were observed wearing blue jackets with epaulets in the winter. Only infantrymen wore long blue overcoats in winter. (6)

Miscellaneous.

12. In the fall of 1950, an unknown number of troops from the barracks installation were discharged. After a festive farewell ceremony they were escorted to the railroad station by the band. Shortly afterward, new recruits wearing civilian clothes reported for active duty. On Sundays, many soldiers attended Catholic services regularly. Religious activity was apparently not restricted.

13. Prior to January 1951, neither a Polish division headquarters nor Soviet officers and EN were observed in Sorau. (7)

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Comments.

(1) Modern six-wheel armored reconnaissance cars are unknown in the Soviet and in the former German Army. The coffin shape indicates either the Soviet four-wheeled BA-64 car or the German four-wheel light, or the eight-wheel heavy, armored reconnaissance car, all of which are not equipped with a gun as heavy as indicated in the report. The SP guns are believed to have been Soviet SU-76s, but their description does not precisely fit any of the known types.

(2) The guns observed probably were light infantry guns, possibly 76-mm model 1943 infantry guns.

(3) The drivers are believed to have belonged to the artillery, SP artillery, and armored reconnaissance units. 25X1A

(4) The unit was possibly equipped with Soviet 122-mm model 1938 field howitzers.

(5) A previous report stated that an infantry regiment was located in the barracks installation in Sorau. See [redacted]. However, the present report indicates that the unit was below regimental strength. It is believed that several independent units were located in the installation.

(6) It is inferred from the change of uniform of the artillery and the motorized infantry unit that the units were integrated into a motorized infantry or tank division in the fall of 1950, whereupon the units were assigned the blue tank troops' uniform.

(7) The No 11th Inf Div has been carried in Sorau since 1948. However, the division headquarters is not confirmed by the present report.

1 Annex: One sketch on ditto.

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